

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 1998, the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) conducted a baseline study among its customers across the state. That study established a baseline of customer satisfaction with and opinion of OFM products and services. Based on those findings, OFM implemented changes and improvements in its products and services. A second study was completed in 1999. Based on the results of the 1999 survey, OFM once again implemented changes and improvements in response to its customers' needs. The current 2000 study tracks the satisfaction and opinion of OFM clients over the course of the last two years. It is intended to be the third in a series of annual surveys.

OFM's continuous improvement process is in keeping with the Governor's Executive Order 97-03, and seeks to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the services OFM provides. Because OFM has a central role in budget planning, policy development, fiscal administration and information dissemination for the executive branch of Washington State government, there are many users who depend upon OFM products and services. OFM's goal is to be responsive to the needs of those users.

Gilmore Research Group was commissioned through a 1998 competitive bid process to design and implement the annual customer surveys.

Method Summary

This report presents the year 2000 telephone survey findings and comparisons with the 1998 baseline findings and the 1999 benchmark. The current survey was conducted with a total of 407 randomly drawn OFM customers (102 managers and 305 others) from agencies and local governments across the state. The questionnaire used was very similar to the 1998 and 1999 instruments that allowed customers to evaluate OFM only in the product and service areas that they use. The current questionnaire was designed to elicit more in-depth information on how improvements could be made.

As a part of this study, the managers group was asked a short series of key questions about OFM's commitment, communications and help in understanding priorities. The managers group and 122 other customers were asked an additional series of questions about the budget appeals process. These other customers were randomly drawn from a group of respondents who reported having contact with the Budget Division during the past year.

Data collection was conducted between May 4th and May 30, 2000. This summary presents key findings from all the telephone interviews.

Reading the Summary Tables

The Executive Summary tables show ratings from across the OFM workgroups (the Budget Division, the Statewide Accounting Consultants Group, the Statewide Financial Systems Group, the Personal Services Contracting Group and the Population and Forecasting Group) broken out by high, middle and low scores, in the same manner as the figures which appear in the detailed findings section. For comparison purposes, the proportions of high, middle and low scores are shown for the 1998, 1999 and current surveys.

Significant year-to-year changes (at 95% level of probability) are noted in the text and are bolded and italicized in the tables. In those cases when a significant change has occurred over the three year period, the following footnote conventions have been used to signal precisely where the statistically significant relationships have occurred:

¹The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

²The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

All other year-to-year comparisons are statistically unchanged.

It may sometimes appear that large differences exist between the percentages of any given year. Statistical testing, however, takes into account that many of the percentage bases (i.e., the numbers of respondents who were asked the questions) are relatively small. The smaller the question base, the larger a difference must be to show statistical difference, as illustrated below:

| <u>Sample Size</u> (Base of respondents asked the question) | <u>Percentage Point Difference Required to Demonstrate Significant Change at P ≥95% *</u> |
|--|---|
| Under 100 | Minimum of 20 |
| 100-149 | 16-20 |
| 150-199 | 14-16 |
| 200-249 | 12-14 |
| 250-299 | 11-12 |
| 300-349 | 10-11 |
| 350-399 | 9.8-10.4 |
| 400-430 | 9.4-10.4 |

**These percentage points apply to the sample size when the response to any question is 50%. When the response is higher or lower than 50% of the sample, the expected margin of error is less.*

In those instances when a statistically significant year-to-year change has occurred between response proportions, both response proportions will be ***bolded*** and ***italicized*** as in the example given below.

| | <u>1998</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2000</u> |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Accounting Consultants Group helps my agency carry out its responsibilities | <i>53%</i> | <i>63%</i> ¹ | 55% |

¹The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

²The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

Key Findings

Overall Observations

Customer ratings for OFM workgroups varied somewhat from 1999 to 2000. Depending on the subject area, some scores showed significant increases over 1999 marks while others showed significant decreases.

Many workgroup customers continued to give high scores for workgroup assistance to agencies. The Budget Division again received somewhat fewer high ratings than other groups, but none of the groups' scores showed much change from those received in 1999.

While most OFM decision-making scores remained generally stable there were some notable changes. This year the Accounting Consultants gathered significantly more high ratings for involving customers in decisions than last year. The Accounting Consultants also gathered more high ratings for timely decisions. The Personal Services Contracting scores remained unchanged.

OFM customer service – defined as courtesy, fairness, responsiveness and listening - achieved mainly high ratings except for a few ups and downs. The Budget Division and the Accounting Consultants showed more high ratings than last year. Budget Division ratings for courtesy and responsiveness increased significantly over 1999. The Financial Systems group received significantly fewer high ratings for listening to customers. Population and Forecasting and Personal Services Contracting have remained unchanged across the three years.

Customer satisfaction scores improved for some workgroups and remained stable for others. Population and Forecasting products and services gathered significantly more high overall satisfaction ratings in 2000 than in 1999. Financial Systems also gathered significantly more high satisfaction ratings in 2000 for budget requests than in 1999. Additionally, Financial Systems gathered significantly more high ratings for information for management in 2000 over the 1998 baseline. Many of those customers to whom the various OFM products and services are important are satisfied. Most of the gaps* between importance and satisfaction, however, continue to be 20 percentage points or larger. Only Personal Services Contracting, Accounting consulting and technical support, Population and Forecasting products and services and Accounting policies and procedures have gaps of 19 or fewer percentage points.

Executive level perceptions of OFM were unchanged.

With the exception of the Accounting Consultants, all OFM workgroups scored somewhat fewer high ratings for technical knowledge this year than in 1999. Ratings for technical knowledge of the Financial Systems staff fell significantly below the 1999 mark. Most customers rated most of the groups highly for accessibility.

Customer ratings for OFM information integrity remained high in 2000. Customer ratings for OFM data are unchanged, as are most of the policy and procedure and technical assistance

ratings. One notable setback is the significant decrease in the number of high ratings given for having technical assistance in the desired format.

*When the high importance and high satisfaction ratings are compared, a “gap” appears to the extent that satisfaction does not meet importance.

How well does OFM provide assistance to agencies?

In 2000, from one-third to more than one-half of the customers gave high ratings to the help that OFM workgroups provide for agencies and organizations. This year, the Personal Services Contracting Group maintained its majority of high ratings and so did the Accounting Consultants Group. OFM other than Budget and Accounting increased its high ratings significantly over 1998. The Financial Systems Group continued to show an increase in its share of high ratings. In 2000, there were significantly more customers who did not give an opinion about the usefulness of budget preparation instructions than there were in 1998. More of these customers were non-managers than managers.

| | % of Ratings of 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|
| | <u>High (6-7)</u> | | | <u>Middle (4-5)</u> | | | <u>Low (1-2-3)</u> | | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Personal Services Contracting Group meets my needs | 57% | 55% | 58% | 29% | 34% | 32% | 5% | 7% | 7% |
| Accounting Consultants Group helps my agency carry out its responsibilities | 53 | 63 ¹ | 55 | 35 | 29 | 30 | 8 | 3 | 5 |
| OFM other than Budget and Accounting helps my agency carry out its responsibilities | 39 | 44 | 48 ³ | 40 | 38 | 33 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Financial Systems Group equips me with the tools I need to do my job | 35 | 45 ¹ | 47 ³ | 49 | 42 | 39 | 15 | 9 | 7 |
| Budget Division helps my agency carry out its responsibilities | 37 | 44 | 37 | 47 | 37 | 42 | 10 | 15 | 12 |
| Budget Division has useful instructions for budget preparation | 36 | 29 | 32 | 37 | 40 | 37 | 13 | 13 | 8 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

How is OFM's decision-making process perceived?

As occurred in the two previous surveys, OFM's decision-making process received more low ratings than other attributes that were tested. The Personal Services Contracting Group has been an exception to this observation. However, Personal Services Contracting decision timeliness may be trending downward. Although the decrease in 2000 is not statistically significant, past years' high ratings seem to have slipped into the middle range of scores. It is important to be cautious in interpreting a possible trend down because only a small number of Personal Services Contracting customers actually provided ratings (please see "Making Comparisons, 1998 to 2000," p. 18). An observed shift of high ratings may only be a function of small sample size. Increasing the number of Personal Services Contracting customers asked to give ratings (increasing the size of the sample), over time, would probably help determine whether the trend is real or not.

There were signs of improvement in some decision-making attributes. Scores for the Accounting Consultants Group continued to advance, as evidenced by significantly more high ratings given for timely decision-making and customer involvement in decisions. Low ratings for these items remained significantly lower than 1998 marks.

Most ratings given for Budget Division decision-making remained steady, with about one-third of customers giving Budget Division decision-making a high score of 6 or 7.

While the proportion of high ratings for customer involvement in decisions of the Financial Systems Group showed a slight decrease over 1999, the change is not statistically significant, and the proportion of this Group's high ratings is still well above the baseline measure. Low ratings remain about the same as in 1999. This year's customers were significantly more likely to say "don't know" or "does not apply" when asked to rate involvement in decisions than 1998 customers (19% versus 9%).

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|------|------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Personal Services Contracting Group makes decisions in a timely manner | 58% | 54% | 46% | 32% | 26% | 31% | 1% | 5% | 5% |
| Accounting Consultants Group makes decisions in a timely manner | 25 | 41¹ | 45³ | 47 | 42 | 43 | 22 | 5¹ | 2³ |
| I can be involved in the decisions of the Accounting Consultants Group that affect my job | 14 | 16 | 37^{2, 3} | 35 | 46 | 25 | 40 | 19¹ | 23³ |
| Budget Division makes decisions in a timely manner | 34 | 30 | 34 | 42 | 52 | 47 | 17 | 11 | 11 |
| The rationale for OFM Budget decisions is explained to me | 30 | 28 | 30 | 48 | 45 | 50 | 16 | 19 | 12 |
| I can be involved in the | 13 | 25¹ | 20 | 34 | 34 | 27 | 44 | 31 | 34 |

decisions of the Financial
System Group that affect my
job

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

How do customers feel about OFM's customer service?

Customers continue to be generally pleased with OFM customer service, as evidenced by the mostly high ratings that they gave staff for being fair, courteous, responsive and for listening. The Budget Division significantly increased its share of high ratings for courtesy and responsiveness over 1999 marks. Additionally, Accounting Consultants' high scores for customer service showed an increase over baseline measures. Population and Forecasting and the Personal Services Contracting Group maintained their baseline and 1999 marks. However, the Financial Systems Group suffered a setback in the high ratings given for staff listening.

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| <u>Budget Division Staff</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Courteous | 72% | 65% | 80% ² | 23% | 23% | 15% | 3% | 6% | 3% |
| Fair | 67 | 57 | 62 | 25 | 26 | 23 | 4 | 7 | 7 |
| Responsive | 60 | 46 | 61 ² | 31 | 39 | 28 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Listens | 61 | 55 | 58 | 27 | 25 | 22 | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| <u>Accounting Consultants Staff</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Courteous | 67% | 83% ¹ | 81% ³ | 27% | 11% | 12% | 4% | 2% | 2% |
| Fair | 69 | 78 | 77 | 26 | 15 | 14 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Responsive | 54 | 73 ¹ | 72 ³ | 36 | 19 | 23 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| Listens | 57 | 65 | 65 | 33 | 25 | 24 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| <u>Financial Systems Staff</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Courteous | 69% | 80% | 70% | 21% | 14% | 13% | 3% | 1% | 2% |
| Fair | 58 | 69 | 61 | 33 | 24 | 22 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Responsive | 45 | 64 ¹ | 53 | 41 | 26 | 29 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| Listens | 48 | 63 ¹ | 46 ² | 36 | 26 | 31 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| <u>Population and Forecasting Staff</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Courteous | 80% | 76% | 78% | 13% | 15% | 8% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| Fair | 73 | 70 | 73 | 21 | 22 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Responsive | 67 | 67 | 74 | 28 | 23 | 12 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Listens | 60 | 66 | 65 | 27 | 18 | 16 | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| <u>Personal Services Contracting Staff</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Fair | 77% | 77% | 66% | 14% | 12% | 19% | 0% | 0% | 3% |
| Courteous | 78 | 70 | 68 | 18 | 19 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Responsive | 71 | 67 | 62 | 25 | 23 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Listens | 58 | 72 | 53 | 32 | 11 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| <u>Customer Service Oriented</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Accounting Consultants | 49% | 60% | 59% | 43% | 32% | 30% | 4% | 2% | 3% |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|
| Budget Division | 39 | 34 | 41 | 48 | 45 | 39 | 9 | 15 | 13 |
| OFM other than Budget and Accounting | 40 | 42 | 44 | 35 | 38 | 33 | 8 | 5 | 5 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

How do customers feel about OFM staff technical knowledge and accessibility?

All of the OFM workgroups received a majority of high customer ratings on technical knowledge. The Accounting Consultants' high scores continued to increase significantly compared to 1998. The Financial Systems staff received significantly fewer high ratings this year, compared to 1999. Population and Forecasting, the Budget Division, and Personal Services Contracting staff have maintained their ratings.

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| Technical Knowledge | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Accounting Consultants Staff | 64% | 77% ¹ | 82% ³ | 29% | 14% | 12% | 6% | 3% | 2% |
| Population and Forecasting Staff | 76 | 81 | 79 | 20 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Financial Systems Staff | 62 | 74 | 60 ² | 28 | 22 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Budget Division Staff | 69 | 61 | 58 | 21 | 29 | 29 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Personal Services Contracting Staff | 83 | 77 | 57 | 13 | 12 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

A majority of the customers gave the Budget Division, Accounting Consultants and Population and Forecasting groups high ratings for accessibility. Nearly as many customers gave the Financial Systems staff and the Personal Services Contracting staff high ratings. With the exception of the Personal Services Contracting staff, all ratings for accessibility are above the 1998 scores, for the Accounting Consultants staff, significantly so.

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------|-------------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| Accessibility | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Population and Forecasting Staff | 61% | 65% | 71% | 33% | 23% | 14% ³ | 1% | 3% | 1% |
| Accounting Consultants Staff | 42 | 60 ¹ | 62 ³ | 43 | 33 | 28 ³ | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| Budget Division Staff | 52 | 44 | 55 | 35 | 42 | 36 | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| Financial Systems Staff | 42 | 47 | 44 | 45 | 42 | 35 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| Personal Services Contracting Staff | 58 | 58 | 46 | 34 | 32 | 45 | 4 | 0 | 3 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

What are the executive level customers' perceptions of OFM?

Executive level perceptions about OFM were unchanged over the course of a year. As in 1999, executive level respondents were more positive about OFM's commitment to their agencies' success than they were about other aspects of OFM performance, especially internal communication and coordination at OFM. About one executive in four felt that there had been some improvement in internal communication and coordination over the past 12 months.

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | <u>High (6-7)</u> | | <u>Middle (4-5)</u> | | <u>Low (1-2-3)</u> | |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 1999 | 2000 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Commitment to agency success | 41% | 41% | 46% | 43% | 13% | 16% |
| Help in understanding priorities | 31 | 29 | 47 | 52 | 20 | 18 |
| Internal communication and coordination | 14 | 19 | 52 | 43 | 20 | 22 |
| Communication/coordination improvement | 25 | 23 | 49 | 39 | 22 | 25 |

How do customers feel about the information provided by OFM?

OFM information remains highly valued by its customers. High ratings for overall integrity again increased over 1998. OFM data and technical assistance again gathered somewhat more high ratings than OFM policies and procedures. It is important to note however, that customers continued to give significantly higher ratings for timely and understandable policies and procedures. These were areas that were targeted for improvement during 1999 and 2000.

| | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|------|------------------|-------------|------|------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Integrity of OFM information | 70% | 78% ¹ | 79% ³ | 25% | 18% | 15% ³ | 4% | 2% | 3% |
| Overall information rating | 62 | 61 | 57 | 34 | 36 | 37 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u>OFM Data</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Credible | 73 | 74 | 78 | 22 | 22 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Accurate | 71 | 74 | 75 | 19 | 20 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Unbiased | 69 | 70 | 75 | 20 | 19 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| Useful | 66 | 69 | 68 | 30 | 26 | 26 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Complete | 61 | 64 | 66 | 32 | 30 | 25 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Understandable | 58 | 53 | 61 | 37 | 42 | 30 ² | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| Timely | 58 | 58 | 58 | 35 | 31 | 38 | 5 | 9 | 5 |
| Format I want | 48 | 39 | 42 | 40 | 50 | 42 | 9 | 8 | 11 |
| <u>OFM Policies and Procedures</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Understandable | 26% | 38% | 41% ³ | 63% | 46% | 42% ³ | 10% | 13% | 12% |
| Useful | 54 | 58 | 53 | 38 | 34 | 39 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Timely | 32 | 42 | 45 ³ | 44 | 43 | 40 | 19 | 9 | 6 |
| Complete | 46 | 56 | 49 | 47 | 37 | 38 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Format I want | 35 | 46 | 44 | 47 | 39 | 38 | 16 | 11 | 11 |
| <u>OFM Technical Assistance</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Understandable | 49% | 50% | 51% | 42% | 45% | 39% | 6% | 6% | 10% |
| Useful | 62 | 63 | 60 | 32 | 34 | 33 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Timely | 45 | 61 ¹ | 51 | 46 | 33 | 43 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Complete | 54 | 65 | 50 | 40 | 32 | 42 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Format I want | 37 | 56 ¹ | 39 ² | 53 | 39 | 47 | 5 | 3 | 12 |
| Accurate | 58 | 74 ¹ | 67 | 35 | 23 | 28 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Unbiased | 55 | 70 ¹ | 62 | 34 | 24 | 28 | 5 | 5 | 9 |
| Credible | 65 | 77 | 64 | 28 | 22 | 29 | 4 | 2 | 5 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

How important are OFM products and services to customers?

All of the OFM product and service areas were rated as highly important by at least half of all customers. No significant changes have occurred across the three years.

| Ranked by 2000 High Importance | | | | High (6-7) | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale * | | | Low (1-2-3) | |
|---|------|------|------|------------|---------------------------------|------|------|-------------|------|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Financial Systems accounts payable systems | 71% | 79% | 71% | 15% | 10% | 14% | 14% | 9% | 9% |
| Budget Division products and services | 79 | 77 | 74 | 17 | 15 | 19 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Accounting policies and procedures | 72 | 76 | 77 | 22 | 20 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Financial Systems information for management | 74 | 73 | 74 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Population and Forecasting products and services | 77 | 73 | 78 | 20 | 25 | 18 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Financial Systems budget requests | 73 | 71 | 78 | 22 | 19 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Accounting consulting/technical support | 63 | 70 | 64 | 27 | 23 | 24 | 10 | 4 | 8 |
| Personal Services Contracting products and services | 74 | 62 | 61 | 19 | 25 | 27 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| Financial Systems accounts receivable systems | 56 | 56 | 57 | 20 | 20 | 24 | 24 | 19 | 13 |
| Financial Systems time/labor/cost allocations | 48 | 49 | 50 | 25 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 24 | 20 |

* There were no significant differences.

How satisfied are customers with OFM products and services?

At least half of the customers gave high satisfaction scores to six out of ten OFM product and services this year. However, the Budget Division and three areas of Financial Systems – budget requests, accounts receivable and time/labor/cost allocations – received high-range satisfaction ratings of less than 50%. In spite of this, Financial Systems gathered significantly more high ratings in 2000 for budget requests than in 1999. Additionally, Financial Systems gathered significantly more high ratings for information for management again in 2000 than in 1998. Population and Forecasting products and services gathered significantly more high ratings in 2000 than in 1999.

The vast majority of customers said their satisfaction with OFM workgroups is the same or better than one year ago.

| Ranked by 2000 High Performance | % of Ratings on 7-Point Scale | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | High (6-7) | | | Middle (4-5) | | | Low (1-2-3) | | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Accounting consulting/technical support | 58% | 60% | 62% | 32% | 33% | 30% | 7% | 3% | 3% |
| Personal Services Contracting products and services | 67 | 59 | 58 | 27 | 31 | 28 | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| Population and Forecasting products and services | 63 | 57 | 72² | 30 | 39 | 26 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Financial Systems accounts payable systems | 43 | 52 | 50 | 38 | 34 | 34 | 9 | 4 | 1 |
| Accounting policies and procedures | 48 | 51 | 58 | 44 | 41 | 34 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Financial Systems information for management | 36 | 51¹ | 50³ | 47 | 36 | 43 | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| Financial Systems budget requests | 39 | 35 | 46² | 41 | 41 | 32 | 9 | 5 | 12 |
| Budget Division products and services | 49 | 45 | 44 | 42 | 45 | 51 | 6 | 9 | 5 |
| Financial Systems accounts receivable systems | 35 | 42 | 37 | 37 | 33 | 43 | 14 | 4 | 4 |
| Financial Systems time/labor/cost allocations | 28 | 31 | 29 | 46 | 31 | 41 | 10 | 6 | 2 |

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

Where are the opportunities to increase customer satisfaction with OFM products and services?

When the high importance and high satisfaction ratings are compared, a “gap” appears to the extent that satisfaction does not meet importance. This implies a disappointment in the expectations that customers have of product and service performance.

As seen below, the five largest gaps between importance and satisfaction in 2000 occur with three out of five products and services that are rated as highly important (by an asterisk) by the users of those products and services. One other highly important product (Population and Forecasting products and services) has a large proportion of high satisfaction ratings, making its gap relatively narrow.

Any gaps of 20 or more points represent areas where OFM can work to increase satisfaction with its products and services.

Progress was made in 2000 in narrowing the gap in customers’ expectations for several items. Financial Systems information for management again showed a significant decrease in the importance/satisfaction gap over the baseline.

| <u>Ranked by 2000 Improvement Opportunity</u> | <u>Year-to-Year Comparison of the Gap Between High Ratings on Importance and Satisfaction</u> | | |
|---|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Financial Systems budget requests* | 34% | 36% | 32% |
| Budget Division products and services* | 30 | 32 | 30 |
| Financial Systems information for management* | 38 | 22 ¹ | 24 ³ |
| Financial Systems accounts payable systems | 28 | 27 | 21 |
| Financial Systems time/labor/cost allocations | 20 | 18 | 21 |
| Financial Systems accounts receivable systems | 21 | 14 | 20 |
| Accounting policies and procedures* | 24 | 25 | 19 |
| Population and Forecasting products and services* | 14 | 16 | 6 |
| Accounting consulting/technical support | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| Personal Services Contracting | 7 | 3 | 3 |

**Asterisk indicates the five most important products and services, as rated by users in 2000.*

¹ The change is significant for 1999 and 1998 results

² The change is significant for 2000 and 1999 results

³ The change is significant for 2000 and 1998 results

What are the characteristics of the OFM telephone survey customer?

Fewer customers came from Executive Cabinet agencies this year (47%) than in 1998 (60%) or in 1999 (54%). Less than one-quarter (23%) of the customers came from other state agencies – a proportion similar to years past. Overall, these customers held positions of employment with the state for a median period of time of 15 years. Approximately two out of five named accounting as their primary functional work area and about one-third named budget.

Conclusions

- It is not unusual for satisfaction survey scores to remain unchanged across years. It takes time to implement procedures that are successful in showing measurable improvement. In addition, if good scores are achieved in the baseline it requires high levels of service to maintain those scores. **Two workgroups maintained the generally high ratings they had since the 1998 baseline: Population and Forecasting and Personal Services Contracting.**
- **Areas that were targeted for improvement in 1998, however, should begin to show change in three years**, assuming an effective implementation effort. It is critical to keep continuous improvement as a goal.
- **Progress has been made in OFM customer service this year.** The Budget Division has acquired more shares of high ratings for courtesy and responsiveness and the Accounting Consultants have maintained their 1999 increase on those same attributes. Financial Systems lost the gain they made in 1999 for listening and this workgroup may need to review this area of customer service. All other attributes and groups are at about the same levels they have been for the past two years.
- While a **majority of customers continue to give OFM high ratings for technical knowledge**, it should be noted that the Financial Systems customer rating for technical knowledge dropped significantly this year, which could signal a need for review of this customer service area. In addition, the Personal Services Contracting staff may be on a slight downward trend of high ratings for this item. It is important to be cautious in interpreting this trend, however, because only a small number of Personal Services Contracting customers actually provided ratings (please see "Making Comparisons, 1998 to 2000," p. 18). The observed shift of high ratings may only be a function of small sample size. Increasing the number of Personal Services Contracting customers asked to give ratings (increasing the size of the sample), over time, would help determine whether the trend is real or not.
- **The overall customer service results are mixed for the Financial Systems group.** While year 2000 customers gave significantly fewer high ratings for staff listening and technical knowledge than 1999 customers, nine out of ten said their satisfaction with the Statewide Financial Systems group today is about the same or higher than one year ago, which suggests that something other than these two service elements are driving overall satisfaction with the workgroup. Indeed, it is noteworthy that year 2000 customers gave significantly more high ratings for preparation and submittal of budget requests than 1999 customers.
- **Staff accessibility and decision-making** were areas needing improvement after the baseline survey in 1998 and still **remain areas of need for most of the workgroups.** Measurable improvement has been made by the Accounting Consultants in both of these

areas. The Personal Services Contracting Group has maintained its high ratings on decision involvement, and Population and Forecasting has always been seen by their customers as very accessible. Customers of the other workgroups are having less success in moving ratings upward on these two attributes.

- **Customers continue to comment this year that they have noticed positive changes within OFM.** Specific mentions were made about having on-line access to workgroups over the past year. It will be interesting to see if this translates into greater high ratings for accessibility to OFM and involvement in decisions over the year ahead.
- **There is evidence that customers are pleased with OFM improvement efforts, such as the SAAM re-write, the budget instructions re-write and the new BDS system.** Compared to comments made in 1999, this year's customers rarely mentioned having any accounting information needs. Moreover, year 2000 customers gave significantly more high ratings to understandability and timeliness of OFM policies and procedures than 1998 customers. And when they were asked to name the one or two things that OFM has done over the past two years to help their organizations, a sizeable proportion of customers (15%) mentioned the budget process information system.
- There is still **opportunity** to move customers upward on the rating scales. The proportions of customer ratings at the low end of the scales remain small on most of the measures, as they were in both 1998 and 1999. It is encouraging that OFM can continue to increase high scores by moving customers from the middle ratings, rather than having to focus on the low (negative) ratings. There are a few attributes for which the low scores increased this year—albeit not significantly—and they should be tracked.
- **Ratings for OFM information are generally good.** Integrity of the information again received a substantial majority of high ratings, and customers remain satisfied with the data they receive. Many, however, continue to feel that OFM policies and procedures and OFM technical assistance warrant only middle ratings. It is gratifying that after concerted effort on the accounting policies and procedures manual, customers have provided significantly better ratings for this document's understandability and timeliness. It is equally disappointing to see that the gain shown for technical assistance format in 1999 was lost this year and the ratings for format reverted to the same lower level as in the baseline.
- Importance/satisfaction gaps occur when satisfaction with products and services does not match perceived importance of those projects and services. This year six product and service areas show gaps of 20 points or over, **suggesting where overall satisfaction can be increased.** Five of these areas occur within the Financial Systems Group: budget requests; information for management; accounts payable systems; accounts receivable; and time/labor/cost allocations. The sixth area occurred for Budget Division products and services.
- In 1999, the lack of high scores from the executive level customers suggested these customer interactions would be a logical area for targeting improvements. **These**

executive level ratings have not changed over the past year. The relatively poor perception of OFM's internal communication and coordination is the poorest of any attribute rated in both 1999 and 2000.

- The OFM workgroups continued to improve their customer lists. Current telephone numbers and current contacts (those who actually did have OFM contact within the past year) were both excellent. **This reflects good effort on the part of the OFM staff who worked to keep the lists up-to-date.**